Agreement with Bangladesh

*399. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

SHRI LALIT SURI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Bangladesh both have agreed to work closely on security, trade and river water sharing;

(b) if so, what were the main agreements reached during the recent talks;

(c) the steps being taken to implement these agreements; and

(d) whether there has been any improvement between the two countries on these issues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. During the visit of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh to India (March 20-22, 2006), both sides held comprehensive discussions on the entire gamut of bilateral relations. The two leaders reaffimed their commitment to work together closely to find mutually satisfactory solutions to all outstanding issues including those related to security, trade and river water sharing.

It was agreed that meetings of bilateral institutional mechanisms dealing with various issues would be held more frequently to ensure positive movement and their outcome monitored by the political leadership. Two agreements were signed during the visit. These were the Revised Trade Agreement and the Agreement for Mutual Cooperation for Preventing Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and Related Matters.

Mine expansion programme of NLC

*400 SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister, while inaugurating the Golden Jubliee Celebrations of Neyveli Lignite Corporation, announced the Corporation's Rs. 4,200 crore mine expansion programme; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COAL (SHRI SHIBU SOREN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government of India sanctioned the Mine-II Expansion project of 4.50 MTPA capacity (cost—Rs. 2,161.28 Crore with foreign exchange component of Euro 112.71 Million) and the linked Thermal Power Station-II Expansion project of 500 MW capacity (cost-Rs. 2,030.78 Crore with foreign exchange component of US $ 119.084 Million) on 18.10.2004 for implementation at Neyveli in Tamilnadu.

As per the sanction letter, the mine will commence lignite production on 53rd month from GOI sanction i.e. in February, 2009 and will attain full production on 57th month i.e. in June, 2009. The commissioning schedule of Units I and II of the linked Thermal Power Station-II expansion project will be February, 2009 and June, 2009 respectively.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Long term energy security

2711. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have recently formulated a nuclear power programme to provide long-term energy security to the country based on indigenous nuclear fuel resources;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the stage at which it stands at present?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) A three-stage nuclear power programme to utilize large thorium reserves in the country for electricity generation has been envisaged since the inception of nuclear power-programme in the country.

(b) The three stages of the programme are:

- Pressurised Heavy Reactors (PHWR) in the first stage, based on natural uranium available in the country.
- Fast Breeder Reactors (FBR) utilising plutonium-uranium fuel cycle, in the second stage.
- Reactors for utilisation of our vast resources of thorium, in the third stage.

The three stages have important fuel cycle linkages and have to be gone through sequentially.